

**Historic District Commission Meeting
Monday, November 21, 2011
Town Hall Meeting Room, Old Town Road.
7:00 pm**

Present: Members: Chair William Penn, Vice Chair Martha Ball, Dennis Riordan, Claire McQueeney, Douglas Gilpin, Michael Ballard, and Mark Vaillancourt. Terri Chmiel was present for the recording of the minutes.

Call to Order

Mr. Penn called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Matters from the Public not on the Agenda

No public comment at this time.

Mr. Gilpin made a motion seconded by Mr. Vaillancourt to place the approval of the minutes and the decision on the Windrose Application to the end of the agenda.

7 Ayes (Penn, Ball, Riordan, Vaillancourt, Ballard, Gilpin and McQueeney) 0 Nays

Final Review – Certificate of Appropriateness:

Ballard's Inn Realty, LLC. Plat 7, Lot 23. Application by Sharon Cattera to construct a new balcony, supporting columns, new door and shed roof.

Business Manager Sharon Cattera presented. The applicant explained the proposed balcony will be located on the second story. She stated the railing will match the existing railing on the downstairs level; as well as, the building materials matching the existing. The Commission addressed the diagonal rail that was presented on the west elevation. (See Ballard's Inn Realty, LLC Plat 7, Lot 23 Historic District Commission file showing the correction on the submitted drawings.)

Mr. Gilpin made a motion to approve the application of Ballard's Inn Realty, LLC Plat 7, Lot 23 to construct a new balcony, supporting columns, new door and shed roof based on the findings of fact:

- The building is located within the Historic District.
- This is a relatively new construction built in 1987.
- The new construction will be a two story porch located at the southwest corner of the building in which the second story porch roofing, cornice and gutter, posts and railings will match the recently completed work.
- The diagonal rail as shown on the west elevation will remain horizontal as it is presently constructed.

Mr. Vaillancourt seconded the motion.

7 Ayes (Penn, Ball, Riordan, Vaillancourt, Ballard, Gilpin and McQueeney)

0 Nays

Dorothy Maybury Estate, Plat 7, Lot 87-1. Application by Coastal Quality Construction for the replacement of two dormer windows.

Benjamin Martin owner of Coastal Quality Construction and property owner Gaile Grele were present. Mr. Martin presented on behalf of the owner explaining the windows located on the north side of the house are in need of replacement. The bedroom windows will be replaced with egress windows; thereby, conforming to the building and fire code.

Mr. Riordan made a motion to approve the application for the replacement of two dormer windows for Dorothy Mayberry Estate, Plat 7, Lot 87-1 based on the findings of fact:

- The property is located within the Historic District and is a contributing historic structure.
- The house was built in 1953.
- The two replacement dormer windows face the north side.
- The replacement windows are Paradigm and confirm to code.
- The current windows are one over one and the replacement windows will be one over one.

Ms. McQueeney seconded the motion.

7 Ayes (Penn, Ball, Riordan, Vaillancourt, Ballard, Gilpin and McQueeney)

0 Nays

Tabled Items / Old Business

1. Review of violations.

The Commission was in consensus of sending letters of sign violations to the property/business owners.

2. Review/Define Minor change in the HDC Guidelines.

Ms. McQueeney made a motion to adopt the text to the “Minor Changes to the Exterior:” The Historic District Commission will review and consider changes only during construction without requiring attendance at a full Commission hearing. The Applicant shall submit a letter to the Administrative Assistant of the Commission with supporting documentation requesting the change. This will be reviewed by the HDC Chair and Vice-Chair, or their designated appointees, to determine if: 1) the change is significant that would require review by the full Commission, and 2) the change as presented is acceptable. No change will be allowed until an Official Approval Notice is sent to the Applicant.

Mr. Vaillancourt seconded the motion.

7 Ayes (Penn, Ball, Riordan, Vaillancourt, Ballard, Gilpin and McQueeney)

0 Nays

Mr. Penn thanked Mr. Gilpin for his time on this project.

3. Update and discussion of the Town Council hearing regarding the amendment to Chapter 7.

The Town Council on November 16, 2011 adopted The Amendment to New Shoreham General Ordinances, Chapter 7 Historical Preservation, Section 3 "Designation of Historic Districts and Structures". The Historic District Commission Property Application Form will be updated with changes requested by Mr. Penn.

New Business

1. Discussion of the Rules and Regulations of the Historic District Commission.

Mr. Penn reported that Jennifer Brady Brown and Attorney Katherine Merolla are working on a draft of the rules and regulations for the Commission. No action was taken.

2. Discussion regarding the Spring Street Pump House

Mr. Gilpin spoke in regards to the condition of the pump house. A newly formed Ad Hoc Committee in which members Bob Newhouse, Peter Greenman, John Gasner and Mr. Gilpin were present. Mr. Newhouse asked the Commission to support the efforts of the committee.

The Commission made a motion to support the efforts of the Ad Hoc Committee to ask deferment of the demolition of the Spring Street Pump House until June 30, 2012 to give the committee time to put together a restoration plan and funding based on the following:

- The Spring Street Pump House is a contributing structure in the Historic District.
- As a historically significant structure it is of the utmost importance to preserve the architectural heritage of the island.

6 Ayes (Penn, Ball, Riordan, Vaillancourt, Ballard and McQueeny) 0 Nays
1 Abstain (Gilpin – member of the Ad Hoc Committee)

3. Approve the 2012 meeting schedule

Mr. Gilpin made a motion seconded by Mr. Ballard to approve the 2012 Historic District Commission meeting schedule at the Town Hall Meeting Room at 7:00 pm on the following dates of each month:

January 23, 2012 (4 th Monday)	July 16, 2012
February 27, 2012 (4 th Monday)	August 20, 2012
March 19, 2012	September 17, 2012
April 16, 2012	October 15, 2012
May 21, 2012	November 19, 2012

June 18, 2012

December 17, 2012

7 Ayes (Penn, Ball, Riordan, Vaillancourt, Ballard, Gilpin and McQueeny) 0 Nays

4. Election of Officers

Mr. Gilpin made a motion seconded by Mr. Ballard to nominate William Penn to serve as Chair, Martha Ball, Vice Chair, and Claire McQueeny, Assistant Secretary.

7 Ayes (Penn, Ball, Riordan, Vaillancourt, Ballard, Gilpin and McQueeny) 0 Nays

Approval of Minutes for June 20, 2011, October 17, 2011 and October 21, 2011

A motion was made by Mr. Gilpin and seconded by Mr. Riordan to approve the minutes of June 20, 2011.

7 Ayes (Penn, Ball, Riordan, Vaillancourt, Ballard, Gilpin and McQueeny) 0 Nays

A motion was made by Ms. Ball and seconded by Mr. Penn to approve the minutes of October 17, 2011 with minor changes.

7 Ayes (Penn, Ball, Riordan, Vaillancourt, Ballard, Gilpin and McQueeny) 0 Nays

A motion was made by Mr. Penn and seconded by Ms. Ball to approve the minutes of October 21, 2011.

7 Ayes (Penn, Ball, Riordan, Vaillancourt, Ballard, Gilpin and McQueeny) 0 Nays

Secretary's Report

Terri Chmiel will follow up with Ms. Dodge regarding the sign and awnings for the Harbor Master Building.

Windrose House LLC. Plat 7, Lot 73-1. Application by Herman Hassinger for James & Barbara Morrissey to construct an 8'x8' widows walk on ridge of roof.

The NSHDC has reviewed the application of James and Barbara Morrissey for a proposed "widows walk" addition to their single family dwelling on Plat 7, Lot 73-1.

Following review of all plans presented and the testimony offered the Commission found that the proposed activity would be incongruous with those aspects of the structure, appurtenances and district which the commission has determined to be historically and architecturally significant.

The Commission gave consideration to the following criteria as set forth in RIGL 45-24.1-4 and Application Procedures of the HDC

The historic and architectural significance of the structure and its appurtenances

The building is located in the Historic District created by the Town of New Shoreham in 1982. It is in the Old Harbor Historic District added to the State and National Registers of Historic places in 1972.

It was built circa 1998 and is not an historically significant building; however, the building was designed using the elements of traditional Block Island homes including but not limited to the details of the porch roof ceiling, pitch of the roof and the placement and size of the windows.

The way in which the structure and its appurtenances contribute to the historical and architectural significance of the district

The structure is located on a sloping lawn next to a large historical inn. It was originally under the same ownership and it stands as an example of a structure built to be a part of the architectural landscape, to fit in rather than stand out. Any significant and highly visible alterations to buildings in the district become part of its fabric and impact the entire district.

The addition of a roof walk would introduce a feature which has been a part of large historic houses along the New England coast but has never been a part of the unique Block Island vernacular. Block Island was never part of a global deep water sailing tradition, particularly whaling which elsewhere peaked in the earlier part of the 19th century, with which grand houses with roof walks are associated. The island remained an insular community, a fishing and farming village, until the latter part of the 19th century. The majority of Block Island's historic buildings are from the period 1870-1900, when a great building boom occurred as a result of Block Island's popularity as a resort. Most Block Island homes were built in the ubiquitous 1 ¾ story form (RI Heritage & Preservation Commission book publication Historic & Architectural Resources of Block Island RI, 1991) but with a variety of gables, ells, and decorative details which did not extend to roof walks.

The appropriateness of the general design, arrangement, texture, material, and siting proposed in the plans

In terms of compatibility and continuity there is no historical record of “widow's walks” in the Historic District. There are no guidelines regarding general design, arrangement, texture, material and siting of same as there is no historical precedent of this particular feature on any residential building in the Historic District.

The proposal would diminish the texture of the building, rather than respecting and preserving, the form of the existing structure.

The overall impact of the general design, arrangement, texture and materials does not meet guidelines of the Historic District (roof design, page 11) nor is any type of roof walk included in the definitions (page 38). The proposal represents awkward massing, and is not appropriate or congruous to the neighborhood and would result in a structure that would not be in harmonious rhythm with adjacent roofs (roof design, page 11).

Additionally, the “widow’s walk” addition to the roof top of the residence would result in a massing which would not contribute to the district. It would introduce an element without historic precedent on Block Island.

The applicant has not demonstrated that the proposal is appropriate to the structure, the site or to the New Shoreham Historic District.

Mr. Penn made a motion to deny the application of James and Barbara Morrissey for the “widow’s walk” addition to the single family residence on Plat 7 Lot 73-1 in the Town of New Shoreham for the reasons set forth above.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Ball.

6 Ayes (Penn, Ball, Riordan, Vaillancourt, Ballard and McQueeny) 1 Nays (Gilpin)

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m. in a motion by Ms. McQueeny and seconded by Mr. Gilpin and voted unanimously.

7 Ayes (Penn, Ball, Riordan, Vaillancourt, Ballard, Gilpin, and McQueeny) 0 Nays

Respectfully submitted,
Terri L. Chmiel
Administrative Assistant
Building & Land Use Department
Approved: December 19, 2011